

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Replace the claims with the following rewritten listing:

1. (Original) An earplug comprising:

    a foam; and

    a component nestable with and bondable with said foam, wherein said component is disposed at least partially within a foam insertable portion and at least partially within a foam handle portion.

2. (Original) The earplug of Claim 1, wherein said foam is selected from the group comprising polyurethane, acrylic, acrylic blends, and mixtures and combinations including at least one of the foregoing materials.

3. (Original) The earplug of Claim 1, wherein said component is selected from the group comprising plastic, paper, dense paper, stiff foam, semi-stiff foam, foam, porous foam, cardboard, rubber, and combinations including at least one of the foregoing materials.

4. (Original) The earplug of Claim 1, further comprising at least one depression formed in said foam at least partially along said component and at least partially along said foam handle portion.

5. (Original) The earplug of Claim 1, wherein said at least one component has at least one passage disposed therein.

6. (Original) The earplug of Claim 1, wherein said component comprises a vent for venting a mold during a manufacturing of the earplug.

7. (Original) The earplug of claim 6, wherein said vent comprises a screw threaded portion.

8. (Original) The earplug of Claim 6, wherein said vent comprises a knurled portion.

9. (Original) The earplug of Claim 6, wherein said vent is disposed across the length of the component

10. (Original) The earplug of Claim 6 wherein said vent is disposed at a top of said component.

11. – 17. (Cancelled)

18.- 32. (Cancelled)

33. (Previously Presented) An earplug comprising:

a foam; and

a component nestable with and bondable with said foam;

wherein said component is disposed at least partially within a foam insertable portion and at least partially within a foam handle portion; and

wherein said component comprises a vent for venting a mold during a manufacturing of the earplug;

wherein said vent comprises a tortuous path.

34. (Previously Presented) The earplug of claim 33, wherein said tortuous path comprises a screw threaded portion.

35. (Previously Presented) The earplug of Claim 33, wherein said tortuous path comprises a knurled portion.

36. (Previously Presented) The earplug of Claim 33, wherein said tortuous path extends across an entire length of the component.

37.- 40. (Cancelled)

41. (Previously Presented) The earplug of Claim 33, wherein the tortuous path causes at least one of collapse and densification of the foam during said manufacturing such that the foam cures in the tortuous path and seals the vent.

42. (Previously Presented) The earplug of Claim 41, wherein the foam which is cured in the tortuous path includes at least one of a hardness and a density which is greater than that of the foam formed away from the tortuous path elsewhere in the insertable and handle portions.

43. (Cancelled)